

## KYRGYZSTAN QUARTERLY REPORT Q4 FY 2001

Cooperative Agreement #119-A-00-00-00039-00

### I. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

#### IFES to Conclude Protocol of Understanding with Kyrgyz Ministry of Education

The Minister of Education and Culture, Ms. Kamila Sharshkeeva expressed her agreement to sign a Protocol of Understanding with IFES, thus formally paving the way for introduction of the course into the school curriculum in the 2001-2002 school year. The United States Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Mr. John O'Keefe, agreed to attend as a special guest during the signing ceremony, which will take place in the month of October. The signing event represents a significant commitment on the part of the Ministry of Education, which in effect will be pledging its support for the annual use of the IFES course and materials and eventual introduction into the mainstream civic education curriculum in the country. IFES has consistently received the support of the Ministry and the Embassy during the evolution of this project, and is pleased to be able to enter into a more formal working partnership. This agreement underscores the commitment of both governments to the concept of educating young persons to be aware and active citizens in a democracy.

#### Secondary Level Education Project

During the fourth quarter, IFES/Kyrgyzstan continued to edit its Civic Education democracy textbook for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, teacher's manual and activities book for use in pilot schools. A majority of chapters were reviewed and translated into Russian, and IFES readied to present the textbook to the Ministry of Education for formal acceptance and introduction. The Minister Sharshkeeva has approved the IFES request to commence the course, and the book will be formally pilot-tested commencing in November in a minimum of 100 schools in the northern and southern regions of the country. The book, which consists of more than twenty chapters, will be available to students in both Kyrgyz and Russian. IFES/Kyrgyzstan Project Manager Chedomir Flego directed the editing process together with IFES Vice President for Programs, Juliana G. Pilon, who has been engaged in reviewing and finalizing contents for the textbook and the accompanying teacher's manual. In addition, the teacher's manual and activities book underwent a rewrite in order to make them more consistent with the textbook. Student interactive activities and games, contributed by IFES Civic Education Consultant Simon Jenkins, will also be included in the activities book and are designed to augment the text and meet state requirements for secondary schools. Furthermore, Simon Jenkins and IFES/Kyrgyzstan Project Manager Chedomir Flego organized a pre-piloting focus group consisting of students who were conducting simulations with the activities and providing critical feedback during the month that contribute to the finalization of the activities book. This control mechanism allows IFES to fine tune the material to make it maximally effective. Superior quality of these civic education materials will strengthen civic education in the country and ensure the success of IFES' other programs in the region.

#### Teacher's Training

IFES/Kyrgyzstan conducted a very successful critical thinking and civic education teacher-training program for selected teachers who will form IFES' main teacher trainers. This group

will provide training to the teachers selected by IFES to introduce the civic education course in their schools. The teacher-training program was conducted through the Global Training for Development project, with the Critical Thinking Laboratory of the American University of Kyrgyzstan selected to do the critical thinking training for teachers. The participants appreciated the course and decided to write to the Minister of Education and USAID to request continuation of such trainings. Three teachers trained in the course were from Osh and one of them, from the Uzbek-speaking school. They indicated that there would be a lot of interest among the teachers at the Uzbek schools in adopting the course. IFES Civic Education Consultant Denise Wales, who has been based on Osh, met with these teachers to confirm their interest. Endeavors were made by IFES to find additional funding to print and distribute the course material to the Uzbek-speaking schools in Kyrgyzstan.

### *Tertiary Level Education Project*

During this quarter, IFES/Kyrgyzstan continued progress on its civic education project for university students. The project involves the assembly of a set of materials for first- and second-year university students wishing to study civics and democracy at a higher level and will include the supplementary production of a CD-ROM for use in classrooms as part of a course. A synopsis of proposed chapters was reviewed by a special steering committee created by IFES to monitor progress in the project and provide recommendations. Plans were also put in place for the course to be put to trial in as many as three partner universities in the winter, including two in Bishkek and one in Osh. The steering committee reviewed a number of sources for information on civic responsibility, elections, human rights, rule of law, and other themes that form the heart of the course. The committee additionally believes that information from current secondary and proposed tertiary courses can be readily adapted for the university civic education course.

The CD-ROM portion of the project, which has been spearheaded by special IFES consultant Lamar Cravens, will be implemented as a seminar support program for this course and will be based on the latest civic education programs used by universities in the United States. IFES believes it can improve the proposed program with the CD-ROM and internet-designed concept, which will adopt western-style interactive civic education activities to meet local needs. This approach will significantly support its university program and add to the introduction of more civic education learning in the Kyrgyz Republic. This will be an important step in replacing the current lecturing teaching methods used in Kyrgyzstani educational institutions with more interactive methods of study. More information on the course will also be available on the IFES/Central Asia website ([www.ifescentralasia.kg](http://www.ifescentralasia.kg)).

### *Democracy Summer Camps*

With the successful conclusion of the second Democracy Summer Camp at the Mamakaev facility in Osh, which hosted about 60 students and trainers, IFES has completed its summer camp series for 2001. IFES consultant Denise Wales supervised the Osh summer camp and improved the program by incorporating more activities from the IFES civic education course, such as skills development trainings. The students not only experienced and studied living under conditions of different political regimes but also had the opportunity to learn important new skills of tolerance and understanding of diversity. The program also included training in the organization of political parties, and students conducted activities for the camp in accordance with their particular political regimes. In addition, the students received training on topics such

as gender program awareness, land reform information and heard from specialists in specialized fields of religion, democracy and tolerance education. They also produced their own daily newspaper summarizing activities and events at the camp.

The camps provided an opportunity for students to extend their democratic learning in a safe and enjoyable environment. IFES will now undertake a review of the programs used and develop a more comprehensive student-learning program for following years, which IFES hopes will support the objectives of other IFES programming.

### *Student Activities*

During the fourth quarter, IFES/Kyrgyzstan has been involved in sponsoring student elections at the Kyrgyz Russian Slavonic University (KRSU), the Medical Institute and a number of secondary schools. It has already conducted student training for student elections committees and candidate procedure and campaigning. In addition, student elections at the tertiary level will be conducted as part of IFES' university civic education program, with the results included as part of a guide to other students. University staff will then help to organize and arrange similar activities at other universities.

IFES/Kyrgyzstan also completed a re-draft of the Kyrgyz version of the Student Action Committee (SAC) Manual for teachers and tutors, a Local Self-Government Day (SLGD) Program Booklet and Regulations on Students' Elections in Secondary Schools and plans to introduce the new materials in select schools in the fall. These manuals have been re-drafted following the trialing of the SAC student activities in the 22 schools during the piloting of the textbook in April. The redrafts were based on the experience gained by IFES staff and teachers participating in IFES' 'school of democracy' program, as well as the experience of implementation of similar programs by IFES in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. This improvement and updating of IFES manuals will assist in the future organization of IFES student-oriented activities. Furthermore, these programs will support the objectives of other IFES education programs in the important and relevant areas of conflict mitigation, tolerance, and gender equality studies.

### *Public Survey*

Following intensive consultations with USAID and embassy staff, IFES has undertaken its first major public survey in Kyrgyzstan in five years. IFES is working with the local partner INFOREX to conduct the survey, which is aimed at receiving information on successes in development of civic society in recent years and perspectives of democratic processes. The responses to the survey will make it possible to evaluate properly the perspectives of democratic transformations. In addition, truthful information on the facts of public development will help international organizations to plan their strategy so as to implement their assistance programs in Kyrgyzstan more effectively. Fieldwork was completed in September, with results expected by October. \*\*This project was funded by the CEPPS mechanism.

## **II. MATERIALS PRODUCED**

There were no materials produced during the fourth quarter.

### III. PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

#### Security Concerns

The September 11 events and resulting security concerns for IFES staff in Kyrgyzstan caused a reevaluation of IFES activities. Though the warden security network was activated for U.S. citizens in the country, IFES did not feel that the security threat warranted a decrease in project activities. Though due vigilance is, as always, a necessity, IFES proceeded with efforts to fulfill its workplan by conducting nationwide activities in the sphere of civic education. The exception to that position continues to be Batken Oblast in the far southwest of the country. Batken was listed as an area of programmatic focus only as security conditions allow, due to the continued menace from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Pilot schools for the democracy textbook/course will be included from this region as possible, with SACs and SLGDs NOT included in the upcoming quarter.

#### Secondary Civic Education

During this quarter, IFES/Kyrgyzstan staff concentrated on the rewrite of the civic education coursework in order to reconcile local and Washington contributions, so as to meet international standards.

IFES/Kyrgyzstan has continued to receive strong support from the Minister of Education for the project and excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Education. IFES has arranged the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, tentatively set for October.

One issue of note has been the role of the Institute of Education, which had been playing a significant role in recommending the IFES textbook to the Ministry of Education. Once contacts with Minister Kamila Sharshkeeva increased, the onus of approval shifted to two mid-level ministerial representatives. These representatives suggested that "facilitation fees" would be required to approve the textbook for recommendation to the Ministry. IFES refused to address this requirement, instead opting to deal with the Minister directly. It is expected that the formal signing of the Protocol of Understanding will alleviate the need to deal with any mid-level officials who may be abusing the IFES relationship.

#### Tertiary Civic Education

During the fourth quarter, IFES/Kyrgyzstan submitted synopsis of proposals based on the author's current courses to contribute to IFES' proposed tertiary civic education project. A draft structure has been proposed and work on the project will progress in consultation with IFES Vice President for Programs, Juliana G. Pilon.

The pilot course will be trailed in several universities in the fall, although the project may require closer to 12 months to complete.

A request was received from the professor of languages at Osh University to combine the civic education materials with the language course to form a new undergraduate qualification. The project remains sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs of various university departments.

### Democracy Summer Camps

IFES concluded the two summer camps and the program of activities, which included learning about what it might be like living under different political regimes and used materials developed for the civic education course. About 180 students were accommodated at the two camps, one in the north and the other in the south of the country. Students from participating pilot schools were special guests, while nearly all universities had student representatives at the camps. IFES also targeted more rural students and they constituted a larger proportion of the students attending than at previous summer camps. Judging by student and partner remarks, the summer camps were a big success. Students have already suggested followed up projects using the knowledge and skills gained at the camps.

### Student Activities

IFES has supported student activities in a variety of projects. During the fourth quarter, IFES' main focus has been aimed at introducing Student Action Committees, Student Local Government Days and democratic elections for university and secondary school student representative councils. IFES has the agreement and support of the Vice Rector of the Kyrgyz Russian Slavonic University to introduce democratic student elections in October, and it already trained students at a seminar in the procedures for running democratic elections.